

20

25

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said time-dependent number is capped at a maximum value if said sum exceeds said maximum value.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said limit comprises restricting the number of computing devices on which said user may enable use of said digital work to five computing devices within the first ninety day period following the first enablement of a computing device by said user, plus an additional computing device for each ninety day period following the expiration of said first ninety day period, wherein the maximum number of computing devices on which said user may enable use of said digital work is limited to ten notwithstanding the number of ninety day periods that have elapsed since said first enablement.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said digital work comprises text, and wherein use of said digital work comprises displaying said text on one of said plural computing devices.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said digital work comprises multimedia content, and wherein use of said digital work comprises rendering said multimedia content on one of said plural computing devices.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said multimedia content comprises music, video, animations, or pictures.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said digital work is created subsequent to the provision of said second data to said computing device.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said second data comprises a first cryptographic key, which enables use of said digital work.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said second data further comprises a second cryptographic key, wherein said first and second cryptographic keys are the private

and public keys, respectively, of an asymmetric key pair, wherein said digital work comprises encrypted content and a decryption key which decrypts said encrypted content, and wherein at least a portion of said second data including said second cryptographic key is uploadable to a content provider whereby said decryption key may be included in said digital work in a form
5 encrypted by said second cryptographic key.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said second data comprises information indicative of said user.

10 14. The method of claim 1, wherein said first data is durably stored on said computing device so as to permit the enduring use of said digital work on said computing device.

15 15. A computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions to perform the method of claim 1.

16. A method of activating software installed on plural computing devices, said method comprising the acts of:

20 receiving, from a first computing device, a first request to activate said software installed on said first computing device, said request comprising information indicative of a user, said software having an activated state and a non-activated state;
determining that an activation limit associated with said user has not been reached; and
providing first activation data to said first computing device.

25 17. The method of claim 16, wherein said software comprises content-rendering software, wherein said software renders a first class of digital works without regard to whether it is in the activated state, and wherein said software renders a second class of digital works only when it is in the activated state.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said first and second classes of digital works comprise textual content, and wherein said software comprises text-rendering software.

5 19. The method of claim 17, wherein said first and second classes of digital works comprise multimedia content, and wherein said software comprises multimedia-rendering software.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said multimedia content comprises
10 music, video, animations, or pictures.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein said software in some manner processes a class of digital works, wherein each of said digital works in said class comprises encrypted content and a decryption key which decrypts said encrypted content, said decryption key
15 being included in said digital work in an encrypted form decryptable with a cryptographic key, and wherein said first activation data comprises said cryptographic key.

22. The method of claim 16, further comprising the acts of:
 receiving, from a second computing device, a second request to activate
20 said software installed on said second computing device, said second request comprising information indicative of said user;
 determining that said activation limit associated with said user has been reached; and
 denying activation of said software on said second computing device.

23. The method of claim 16, further comprising the act of providing a secure repository to said first computing device, said secure repository being in at least some way dependent upon said first computing device.

24. The method of claim 16, wherein said activation limit comprises a restriction on the number of activations of said software that said user may request.

25. The method of claim 16, wherein said activation limit comprises a
5 restriction on the rate at which said user may activate said software.

26. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions to perform the method of claim 16.

10 27. A method of activating software on plural computing devices, said method comprising the acts of:

receiving, from a first computing device, a first request to activate first software installed on said first computing device with respect to a first user;

15 determining that an activation limit associated with said first user has not been reached; and

activating said first software with respect to said first user;
wherein said first software renders at least a first class of digital works without regard to whether said first software has been activated, and a second class of digital works only if said first software has been activated with respect to said first user.

20 28. The method of claim 27, wherein each of said first and second classes of digital works comprises textual content.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein each of said first and second sets of
25 digital works comprises multimedia content.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein said multimedia content comprises music, video, animations, or pictures.

31. The method of claim 27, further comprising the acts of:

receiving, from a second computing device, a second request to activate second software installed on said second computing device with respect to said first user;

determining that an activation limit associated with said first user has
5 been reached; and

denying activation of said second software;

wherein said second software renders at least said first class of digital works without regard to whether said second software has been activated, and said second class of digital works only if said second software has been activated with respect to said first user.

10

32. The method of claim 27, further comprising the acts of:

receiving, from said first computing device, a second request to activate said first software with respect to a second user;

determining that an activation limit associated with said second user
15 has not been reached; and

activating said first software with respect to said second user;

wherein said first software further renders a third class of digital works only if said first software has been activated with respect to said second user.

20

33. The method of claim 27, wherein at least some items in said second class are created subsequent to activation of said first software.

34. The method of claim 27, wherein said activation limit comprises a restriction on the number of activations that said first user may request.

25

35. The method of claim 27, wherein said activation limit comprises a restriction on the rate at which said first user may activate software.

36. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions to perform the method of claim 27.

37. A method enabling the use of an enhanced feature available on plural
5 computing devices, said method comprising the acts of:
receiving, from a first computing device, a first request to enable said
enhanced feature on said first computing device;
determining that a limit has not been reached;
enabling the use of said enhanced feature on said first computing
10 device;
wherein said first computing device has at least some non-enhanced features usable regardless
of whether said enhanced feature is enabled, and wherein said limit is selected from the group
consisting of: a restriction on the number of computing devices on which said enhanced
feature may be enabled, and a restriction on the rate at which computing devices may be
15 enabled to use said enhanced feature.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein said enhanced feature is associated with a
user, wherein said limit is associated with said user, and wherein said first request comprises
information indicative of said user.
20

39. The method of claim 38, wherein said information comprises a username
and password, and wherein said method further comprises the act of querying a namespace
authority to validate said username and password.

40. The method of claim 37, wherein said enhanced feature comprises
25 rendering a first class of digital works, and wherein said non-enhanced features comprise
rendering a second class of digital works.

41. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions to perform the method of claim 37.

42. A method of activating software for use by a persona on a limited number
5 of computing devices, said method comprising the acts of:

- receiving said persona's credentials;
- authenticating said credentials by querying a namespace authority;
- requesting first information from the remote computing device;
- determining a number of activations of the software within a first
10 period of time in accordance with the persona's credentials and first information requested
from the remote computing device; and
- if the number of activations is less than a maximum number of
activations within said first period of time, then:
 - generating an activation certificate that includes second
15 information related to the persona's credentials; and
 - uploading said activation certificate to the remote computing
device to activate the software residing on the remote computing device such that operation of
the software is associated with the persona's credentials.

20 43. The method of claim 42, further comprising the act of increasing said
maximum number after the elapse of a second period of time.

44. The method of claim 42, wherein said software renders a first set of digital
works without regard to whether said activation certificate is present on said remote
25 computing device, and wherein said software renders a second set of digital works associated
with said persona only if said activation certificate is present on said remote computing
device.

10

20